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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 001877

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SU](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT'S VIEWS ON WAY FORWARD FOR SUDAN

REF: A. CAIRO 1603

[B](#). STATE 84386

[C](#). CAIRO 1528

[D](#). CAIRO 1483

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Government of Egypt (GOE) is extremely concerned about the future of a unified Sudan. Egypt supports the Arab League's initiative for Sudan, (reftels A, B) but is uncertain whether it will produce any results. The GOE opposes the ICC indictment of Sudanese President Bashir because it would undermine stability in Sudan. At the same time, Egypt wants the violence in Darfur to stop and, somewhat paradoxically, the MFA tells us the effort in the UN Security Council (UNSC) to invoke Article 16 of the Rome Statue to defer legal proceedings against Bashir was "premature" because it would reduce any urgency on the Government of Sudan (GOS) to cooperate to resolve the crises in the country. Egypt has discussed its own Sudan initiative with the Sudanese government and there appears to be agreement on the plan, and discussions on next steps including Egyptian engagement with Darfuri rebels and Western governments. However, Egypt is reticent to push its initiative preferring to rely on the international community, USG, and others to resolve the Sudan crisis. The GOE is supportive of a dialogue, between the permanent five members of the UNSC (P-5) and the GOS, which requires GOS action on the ground in exchange for assurances from the P-5. The political counselor at the Sudanese Embassy in Cairo said that a U.S. role was imperative to resolving the situation in Darfur, and that the GOS wanted "continuous, serious, and direct dialogue" with the USG on Darfur. End Summary

Egyptian Concern Over Sudan, ICC

[1](#)2. (C) Egyptian MFA Spokesman and Senior Cabinet Advisor Hossam Zaki on August 14 told Pol Mincouns that the GOE is "extremely concerned" about the stability of Sudan, even more than during the North-South war. "Our people are seriously contemplating the unraveling of Sudan. It is very daunting," he said. "There are serious threats to stability in the south, Darfur and now the east." Zaki said that there is an intense internal debate on Egypt's options vis-a-vis Sudan. "A unified Sudan has always been a top priority" and, he said "A divided Sudan is not good for the region." This feeling was echoed by Deputy Assistant Minister for American Affairs Mohammad Aboul Dahab in a separate conversation on August 13. He said that the MFA recently received a report from its Embassy in Khartoum that addressed the possibility of Sudan breaking into not two, but five pieces.

[1](#)3. (C) On August 7, MFA Cabinet Advisor for African Affairs Ahmed Abu Zeid told us that the GOE supports the recent Arab League "solution package" for Sudan, but it is too early to tell if the proposal will bear fruit. He thought that the

effort of UNSC members Libya and South Africa to invoke Article 16 of the Rome statute--which would suspend ICC court action against Sudanese President Bashir for one year--was "premature" because it would reduce the incentive for the Sudanese government to cooperate with the international community. He was, however, quick to add that the ICC prosecutor's decision to seek an indictment against Bashir was not helpful because it threatened the unity and stability of the Sudan, the implementation of the CPA, and the peace process in Darfur. Zaki opined that Sudan is not at a stage where it can handle the removal of Bashir. The Sudanese Embassy in Cairo and the Government of South Sudan's Liaison Office in Cairo--during separate conversations on August 18 and 19--echoed their concern that the ICC indictment is a direct threat to the CPA, the Darfur peace process and Sudan's stability.

The Egyptian Plan for Sudan

14. (C) On July 30, MFA Sudan desk officer Ahmed Hussein told us that Egypt has not pushed its initiative on Darfur peace because of the uncertainty over the ICC indictment of Bashir and because the Sudanese have been lukewarm on the idea. The Egyptian initiative asks the GOS to make concessions on power-sharing and dispersing aid for internally displaced persons (IDPs) as part of a political solution. Hussein stated that Egypt would actively push its initiative "if the Sudanese are ready." Mohammad el-Rashed Sid Ahmed, political counselor at the Embassy of Sudan in Cairo, told us that GOE had discussed its initiative with the GOS, and both agreed on three common steps to move the peace process in Darfur forward. First, Ahmed said that the two countries agreed it

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would be more productive for the GOS to begin discussions on Darfur with the international community because the Darfuri groups have no unified position. Abu Zeid echoed this sentiment saying the Darfuri opposition groups were too fragmented, had no common vision, and were in no position to sit down and negotiate with the GOS. Second, Ahmed said the GOE and GOS agreed that it was important, when possible, to facilitate the voluntary return of IDPs to their homes. Third, the two governments were working together to increase development efforts in areas affected by conflict. Ahmed said efforts were focused on providing medical care, education, and jobs. Finally, Ahmed stressed the importance of continued dialogue, and stated that the GOS had asked the GOE to speak with Darfuri rebel groups and Western Governments to get their buy-in on the plan.

Role of the United States

15. (C) Zaki stated that the USG needs to address the current ICC/Sudan situation in a "responsible and rational way, and put sense into people." Egypt doesn't want to compromise human rights concerns, he said, "but an ICC arrest is a clear-cut recipe for disaster." Abu Zeid opined that the U.S. was "not serious enough" in pushing the peace process, and that Special Envoy Williamson was only working "part-time" on a solution and had little dialogue with the Egyptian Government. Ahmed diverged from Abu Zeid's opinion praising the efforts of both Williamson and CDA Fernandez in trying to find a resolution to the Darfur crisis. He stated that the GOS wanted a "continuous, serious and direct dialogue" with the USG on Darfur. Ahmed said that it was imperative that the GOS and USG come to an agreement to finalize the situation in Darfur. However, he cautioned that the USG needs to be realistic about what can be accomplished in Sudan and that applying pressure to the GOS will be counterproductive. He told us that the GOS "does not control everything that goes on within Sudan's borders." As evidence of this he pointed to the JEM attack on Omdurman in May. He stated that solving Darfur will not be easy, but the important thing is to begin negotiations and take it "step-by-step." He said that the USG could help start the process by bringing rebel leaders such as Abdul Wahid al-Nur

to the negotiating table.

¶6. (C) Abu Zeid said that Egypt supports a dialogue between the GOS and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P-5) to create a political and legal framework for defusing tensions in Sudan. He stated that the framework should require tangible, on-the-ground improvement from the GOS in exchange for assurances from the P-5. He believes that if a dialogue on a framework begins before the UN General Assembly in September, it will allow General Assembly discussions to be more productive and permit the UNSC to take action.

¶7. (C) Comment: If Sudan were to break up, it would threaten Egypt's national security by increasing the flow of refugees into the country and jeopardizing Egypt's access to Nile waters. Despite this, Egypt continues to be reluctant to take the lead on Sudan. It has had an initiative in its pocket for months, and the plan appears to have the support of the GOS. Still, Egypt prefers to defer to the Arab League or advocate for discussions between the GOS and P-5, instead of pushing forward with its plan. It is worth noting that Egypt has recently concluded multiple assistance MOUs with Khartoum and Juba, and is working on bilateral development projects with both the GOS and Government of South Sudan (GOSS) to develop infrastructure, preserve access to Nile waters, and build local technical expertise. In dealing directly with the GOSS, Egypt may be trying to hedge its bets so if Sudan does eventually break up, it will have good links in place with GOSS, which will allow it to maintain its access to the Nile and control the inevitable flow of refugees from Sudan.
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